CLAIMS--I claim:

1. A method of enabling an operator to generate any one of a
    plurality of inputs, comprising:
    (a) providing a manual input means having a plurality of
        digit-operated switches by which a human operator
        can generate said plurality of inputs by entering
        chords, each chord comprising a unique combination
        of said switches, each of said switches being
        positioned to be operated by a respective digit of
        said operator, and
    (b) providing a legend presenting a plurality of first
        indicia representing said plurality of inputs, said
        first plurality of indicia selected from the class
        consisting of visual and tactile indicia, a first
        sub-plurality of said plurality of first indicia
        arranged in a plurality of groups, each of said
        groups representing a specific digit, each chord
        corresponding to a specific group of said groups
        comprising a specific switch of said switches, said
        specific switch corresponding to the digit
        represented by said specific group, said groups
        arranged so that said operator can associate said
        groups directly with said respective digits, thereby
        mapping each first indicium of each of said groups
        to the digit represented by the group,
    whereby said operator can easily determine one or two of
    said digits corresponding to each indicium of said first
    plurality by visualizing the position of the indicium
    relative to said groups.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first indicia are
    symbols found on a standard computer keyboard.

3. The method of Claim 1 wherein each chord corresponding to a specific group of said groups of indicia comprises exactly one of said switches corresponding to a finger of a particular hand of said operator, the switch corresponding to the finger represented by the group, whereby said operator can easily determine the finger of said particular hand or the fingers of both hands corresponding to said first indicia in said groups.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein a plurality of said groups of indicia is labeled with respective second indicia, said second indicia indicating said digits represented by said groups, whereby said operator can determine said digits represented by said groups.

5. The method of Claim 4 wherein said second indicia are colors.

6. The method of Claim 4 wherein said second indicia are areas shaped like the respective digits.

7. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first indicia of a plurality of said groups are arranged in an array of diagonal rows, each of said rows being one of said groups, whereby said operator can easily determine two of said digits corresponding to each of said first indicia of said array by visualizing the position of the indicium relative to said array.

8. The method of Claim 7 wherein a middle column of said array corresponding to corresponding digits of the left hand and the right hand of said operator is labeled with a second indicium, whereby said first indicia corresponding to corresponding digits are easily distinguished by said operator, and whereby said first indicia of said array to the left of said middle column and said first indicia of said array to the right of said middle column can be easily distinguished by said operator as separate groups.

9. The method of Claim 8 wherein said second indicium is a color.

10. The method of Claim 7 wherein a second plurality of said first indicia corresponding to two adjacent digits of a particular hand of said operator is shown adjacent to said array, each indicium of said second plurality shown between adjacent rows of said diagonal rows corresponding to the indicium, whereby said operator can easily determine said adjacent digits corresponding to each indicium of said second plurality by visualizing the position of the indicium relative to said array, and whereby said first indicia corresponding to adjacent digits of the left hand of said operator and said first indicia corresponding to adjacent digits of the right hand of said operator can be easily distinguished by said operator as separate groups.

11. The method of Claim 7 wherein a second plurality of said first indicia corresponding to digits of a particular hand of said operator is labeled with second indicia, said second indicia representing said digits of a particular hand, whereby said operator can easily determine said digits corresponding to each indicium of said second plurality.

12. The method of Claim 11 wherein said second indicia are colors.

13. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first indicia of a plurality of said groups are arranged in columns, each of said columns being one of said groups, whereby said operator can easily determine one of said digits corresponding to each of said first indicia of said columns by visualizing the position of the indicium relative to said columns.

14. The method of Claim 13 wherein each of said columns is arranged approximately in line with one of said switches, whereby said operator can easily determine said digits represented by said columns.

15. The method of Claim 13 wherein said first indicia of said columns are arranged in rows, said first indicia of each of said rows corresponding to a specific type of chord, whereby said operator can easily determine the type of chord corresponding to said first indicia of said columns by knowing the row of

the indicium.

16. The method of Claim 15 wherein said first indicia of each of said rows are of a specific type, whereby said operator can easily determine the type of chord corresponding to said first indicia of said columns by knowing the type of the indicium, and whereby said operator can easily determine the specific chord corresponding to each of said first indicia of said columns by visualizing the column of the indicium and knowing the type of the indicium.

17. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first indicia are symbols found on a standard computer keyboard, each chord corresponding to a specific group of said groups of indicia comprises exactly one of said switches corresponding to a finger of a particular hand of said operator, the switch corresponding to the finger represented by the group, a plurality of said groups of indicia being labeled with respective second indicia, said second indicia indicating said digits represented by said groups, said second indicia being colors and areas shaped like the respective digits, said first indicia of a plurality of said groups being arranged in an array of diagonal rows, each of said diagonal rows being one of said groups,

a middle column of said array corresponding to
   corresponding digits of the left hand and the
   right hand of said operator being labeled with a
   third indicium,

said third indicium being a color,

a second plurality of said first indicia
   corresponding to two adjacent digits of a
   particular hand of said operator is shown
   adjacent to said array, each indicium of said
   second plurality shown between adjacent rows of
   said diagonal rows corresponding to the
   indicium,

a third plurality of said first indicia corresponding
   to digits of a particular hand of said operator
   is labeled with fourth indicia, said fourth
   indicia representing said digits of a particular
   hand,

said fourth indicia being colors,

said first indicia of a plurality of said groups
   being arranged in columns, each of said columns
   being one of said groups,

each of said columns being arranged approximately in
   line with one of said switches,

said first indicia of said columns being arranged in
   horizontal rows, said first indicia of each of
   said horizontal rows corresponding to a specific
   type of chord, and

said first indicia of each of said horizontal rows
   being of a specific type.

18. A method of enabling an operator to generate a plurality of inputs, comprising:

(a) providing a manual input means having a plurality of digit-operated switches by which a human operator can generate said plurality of inputs by entering chords, each of said switches operated by a specific digit of said operator, said inputs comprising letters, said letters comprising the alphabet,

(b) providing a plurality of modifiers, said modifiers being symbols other than said letters, said modifiers used in combination with non-modifier symbols to provide an input selected from the class consisting of a different case of the non-modifier symbol and a combination of the modifier and the non-modifier symbol, said non-modifier symbols including said letters,

(c) assigning a first plurality of chords involving only fingers to said letters, said fingers being index, middle, ring, and little fingers of said operator, and

(d) assigning at least one chord involving only thumbs of said operator to said respective modifiers, whereby (1) each chord composed of each chord assigned to said letters and each chord assigned to said modifiers can be assigned to a modified letter, (2) said modified letters can be readily input by said operator by entering a chord said operator composes of one chord assigned to said letters and one chord assigned to said modifiers, (3) said combination can be a known combination of the modifier and the letter commonly used as input to known computer programs, (4) accidental input of said modified letters during input of said letters is prevented, and (5) said chords

involving only thumbs can be easily memorized by said operator as a specific type of chord assigned to said modifiers.

19. The method of Claim 18 wherein said chords of said first plurality of chords assigned to said letters correspond to two of said fingers of said operator, whereby said letters can readily be input, and whereby said chords involving two fingers can be easily memorized by said operator as a specific type of chord assigned to said letters.

20. The method of Claim 19 wherein those of said letters which occur more frequently in American English are assigned chords which are easier to enter, whereby American English is easier to input.

21. The method of Claim 19 wherein frequently occurring vowels are assigned said chords assigned to said letters corresponding to corresponding fingers of the left hand and the right hand of said operator, whereby said chords corresponding to corresponding fingers of the left hand and the right hand can be easily memorized by said operator as a specific type of chord assigned to frequently occurring vowels.

22. The method of Claim 18 wherein a second plurality of chords involving only fingers is assigned to respective characters other than letters, whereby each chord composed of each chord assigned to said characters and each chord assigned to said modifiers

can be assigned to a modified character, said
modified character being a combination of the
modifier and the character, and whereby said
modified characters can be readily input by said
operator by entering a chord said operator composes
of one chord assigned to said characters and one
chord assigned to said modifiers.

23. The method of Claim 22 wherein said second
    plurality of chords involving three of said
    fingers of said operator are assigned to
    punctuation marks and miscellaneous characters
    and brackets for operating a computer, whereby
    said punctuation marks and said miscellaneous
    characters and said brackets can readily be
    input, and whereby said first plurality of
    chords involving three of said fingers can be
    easily memorized by said operator as a specific
    type of chord assigned to said punctuation marks
    and said miscellaneous characters and said
    brackets.

24. The method of Claim 18 wherein a second plurality of
    chords involving one of said fingers and one of said
    thumbs of said operator is assigned to commands for
    operating a computer, whereby said commands can
    readily be input, whereby said chords involving one
    of said fingers and one of said thumbs can be easily
    memorized by said operator as a specific type of
    chord assigned to said commands, and whereby
    accidental input of said commands during input of
    said letters is prevented.

25. The method of Claim 18 wherein a second plurality of chords involving one of said digits of said operator is assigned to numerals, whereby said numerals can readily be input, and whereby said chords involving one of said digits can be easily memorized by said operator as a specific type of chord assigned to said numerals.

26. The method of Claim 25 wherein said numerals correspond in their natural order to said digits of said operator, whereby chords assigned to said numerals can be easily memorized.

27. The method of Claim 18 wherein a plurality of first pairs of said inputs are assigned a plurality of second pairs of chords, said plurality of first pairs being pairwise related inputs, said plurality of second pairs being each other's mirror image by pairwise exchanging switches assigned to corresponding digits of the left hand and the right hand of said operator, whereby said operator is assisted in memorizing said second pairs assigned to said first pairs.

28. The method of Claim 18 wherein said chords of said first plurality of chords assigned to said letters correspond to two of said fingers of said operator, said letters more frequently occurring in American English generally being assigned chords easier to enter, frequently occurring vowels being assigned said chords assigned to said letters corresponding to

corresponding fingers of the left hand and the
right hand of said operator,

a second plurality of chords involving only fingers
is assigned to characters other than letters,

said second plurality of chords involving three of
said fingers of said operator being assigned to
punctuation marks and miscellaneous characters
and brackets for operating a computer,

a third plurality of chords involving one of said
fingers and one of said thumbs of said operator
being assigned to commands for operating a
computer,

a fourth plurality of chords involving one of said
digits of said operator being assigned to
numerals,

said numerals correspond in their natural order to
said digits of said operator, and

a plurality of first pairs of said inputs being
assigned a plurality of second pairs of said
chords, said plurality of first pairs being
pairwise related inputs, said plurality of
second pairs being each other's mirror image by
pairwise exchanging switches assigned to
corresponding digits of the left hand and the
right hand of said operator.

29. A method of enabling an operator to generate a plurality of inputs, comprising:

(a) providing a manual input means having a plurality of digit-operated switches by which a human operator can generate said plurality of inputs by entering chords, each chord comprising a unique combination of switches, each of said switches operated by a specific digit of said operator, and

(b) providing a legend indicating a combination of indicia for each of said plurality of inputs, said indicia selected from the class consisting of colors and tactile indicia, each of said indicia representing a specific digit of said operator, whereby said operator can easily determine which chord to enter to generate one of said inputs.

30. The method of Claim 29 wherein said indicia representing said digits are on said switches assigned to said digits.

31. The method of Claim 29 wherein said switches are keys.

32. The method of Claim 29 wherein said indicia are colors.

33. The method of Claim 32 wherein said colors are pink, red, orange, yellow, white, black, green, blue, purple, and brown, corresponding respectively to the left hand little finger, ring finger, middle finger, index finger, thumb, and the right hand thumb, index finger, middle finger, ring finger, and little finger, whereby

said operator needs to recognize and remember only simple, well-known colors, and whereby said operator can be assisted in memorizing said colors representing said digits by using common knowledge of the order of colors in the spectrum of light as found in a rainbow.

34. The method of Claim 29 wherein said indicia form two easily distinguishable groups, one of said groups representing thumbs of said operator, and one of said groups representing fingers of said operator, said fingers being index, middle, ring, and little fingers, whereby said operator can instantly recognize said indicia representing said thumbs of said operator and said indicia representing said fingers of said operator.

35. The method of Claim 29 wherein said indicia form two easily distinguishable groups, each of said groups representing a particular hand of said operator, whereby said operator can instantly recognize said indicia representing said particular hand of said operator.

36. The method of Claim 29 wherein a plurality of said combinations of indicia are arranged in groups, said combinations of each of said groups being a specific type of combination, whereby said operator can easily determine the specific type of each combination of said groups from the group of said combination.

37. The method of Claim 29 wherein a first group of
    indicia representing said inputs and a second group
    of said combinations of indicia are grouped in
    pairs, each of said pairs pairing one combination of
    said second group to one of said indicia of said
    first group, such that entering the chord
    corresponding to each pair of said pairs generates
    said input corresponding to said pair, whereby said
    operator can determine which chord to enter to
    generate one of said inputs.

38. The method of Claim 29 wherein each of said
    combinations of indicia is arranged in at least one
    group, said group representing the class consisting
    of said fingers of a particular hand of said
    operator and said thumbs of said operator, whereby
    said operator can easily determine said indicia of
    said combinations representing said fingers of said
    particular hand or said thumbs.

39. The method of Claim 29 wherein said indicia
        representing said digits are on said switches
        assigned to said digits,
    said switches are keys,
    said indicia are colors,
    said colors are pink, red, orange, yellow, white,
        black, green, blue, purple, and brown,
        corresponding respectively to the left hand
        little finger, ring finger, middle finger, index
        finger, thumb, and the right hand thumb, index
        finger, middle finger, ring finger, and little
        finger,
    said indicia forming two easily distinguishable

first groups, one of said first groups
representing thumbs of said operator, and one of
said first groups representing fingers of said
operator, said fingers being index, middle,
ring, and little fingers,

said indicia forming two easily distinguishable
second groups, each of said second groups
representing a particular hand of said operator,

a plurality of said combinations of indicia being
arranged in third groups, said combinations of
each of said third groups being a specific type
of combination,

a first set of indicia representing said inputs and
a second set of said combinations being grouped
in pairs, each of said pairs pairing one
combination of said second set to one of said
indicia of said first set, such that entering
the chord corresponding to each pair of said
pairs generates said input corresponding to said
pair, and

each of said combinations being arranged in at least
one fourth group, said group representing the
class consisting of said fingers of a particular
hand of said operator and said thumbs of said
operator.

40. A device for enabling an operator to generate a
plurality of inputs, comprising:

(a) a manual input means having a plurality of
digit-operated switches by which a human operator
can generate said plurality of inputs by entering
chords, each of said chords comprising a unique
combination of switches, each of said switches
operated by a specific digit of said operator, and

(b) a legend indicating a combination of indicia for each
of said plurality of inputs, said indicia selected
from the class consisting of colors and tactile
indicia, each of said indicia representing a specific
digit of said operator,

whereby said operator can easily determine which of said
chords to enter to generate said inputs.

41. The device of Claim 40 wherein said indicia
corresponding to said switches are on said switches.

42. The device of Claim 40 wherein said switches are
keys.

43. The device of Claim 40 wherein said indicia are
colors.